



Ava Middle School

District: Ava R-1 School District

Enrollment: 482

Grade Range: 5-8



For More Information Contact: **Mr. Andy Adams**
 P.O. Box 338
 Ava, Missouri 65608-0338
 417-683-3835
 andyaadams@yahoo.com

The Ava public schools are located in Douglas County in southwest Missouri. Geographically, the Ava district is one of the largest in the State of Missouri and currently houses the only high school in the county. The unemployment rate in Douglas County is 9 percent, one of the highest in the state. Most of Ava district's residents make their living by working in the limited number of jobs available in a local factory, working in the timber industry, farming, and raising livestock. The number of students receiving free and reduced price meals is over 60 percent district-wide. The county's population is fairly stable, as evidenced by the district's enrollment, which has not varied by more than 100 students in the last 50 years.

“Kid Friendly” Environment with Rich Community History

Ava, Missouri, has been fortunate to have had a school as the hub of its community for 100 years. During this time, a culture of caring about one another and a belief in the value of education have steadily grown. Over the years, Ava Middle School has become a center of activity for parents and patrons of the community. The school regularly opens its doors to the public for comprehensive school improvement meetings and other committee work, as well as for social and recreational activities. The communication and cooperation between the students, staff, parents, and community members is a model for other districts to follow.

“BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION...”

- ***Family Fun Night*** – Family Fun Night at Ava Middle School provides an opportunity for families, community members, school personnel and students to come together for a free meal and an evening filled with games, entertainment and refreshments.
- ***Hands-On Class Projects Addressing Multiple Goals*** – A sample learning activity from a seventh grade communication arts class requires students to deliver a persuasive speech convincing the audience to stay drug-free. The lesson focuses on the basic skill of effective communication and addresses broad goals of character education, ethical judgment, and preparation for life in a diverse and complex society.

Parents and community members support the school because of its tranquil, welcoming atmosphere and “kid friendly” methods of discipline and instruction. Students feel genuine affection from an experienced and caring staff, many of whom attended classes in the same hallways where they now teach. Teachers strive to make each day special for as many students as they can, exemplifying the building motto, “Every day is a

wonderful day at Ava Middle School.” These are the types of close-knit relationships that enable students to become productive, permanent members of the community, and ones that will always support the Ava School District. Ava Middle School students reflect the values and beliefs of their community, as they often initiate activities to help friends and family, as well as other charities. This culture has endured through decades and makes the entire community and population truly special.

Mission-Driven Teaching and Learning

Guided by their mission, “Learning is the key to success in a changing world,” faculty and staff at Ava Middle School present all students, regardless of the limited backgrounds they may possess, with high expectations. They focus on the beliefs that high expectations guarantee success for all students. The curriculum addresses the broad goals for student learning and development outlined in the Show-Me Standards. Performance processes are woven throughout the content curriculum emphasizing character education, ethical judgment, preparation for life in a diverse and complex society, appreciation of democratic values, and development of workplace skills. The curriculum is dynamic, as teachers and administrators analyze data from the Missouri Assessment Program using Clear Access, noting strengths and weaknesses and modifying the curriculum accordingly. Teachers use performance-based instructional learning activities, while incorporating innovative teaching techniques proven to be successful in the classroom. An outstanding professional development program ensures that teachers are aware of current instructional practices and research.

“WORDS OF WISDOM”

- **“We strive to provide opportunities for our parents and community members to be an integral part in education.”**
- **Our long-term professional development plan is constantly evolving around the main goal of improving instruction to better meet the needs of our students and community.”**

Indicators of Success

During the past six years, Ava Middle School has implemented a number of programs that have dramatically improved student achievement. The school has been recognized by the Missouri Department of Education twice in the last three years as a “Top 10 Most Improved School” based on student performance on the MAP. The number of students scoring in the highest two levels on the MAP has increased from 13.08 percent in 1998 to 38.5 percent in 2003. At the same time, the number of students scoring in the bottom two levels on the assessment has decreased from 52.34 percent in 1998 to 25 percent in 2003. In addition, the dropout rate has decreased each year, while average daily attendance has approached 95 percent.

Ava Middle School provides a safe, orderly climate with a fiercely loyal staff, dedicated to providing an excellent education to the students it serves.